T/N note: Arashi's name means "storm," while Shizuka's name means "quiet." The two "puppetmasters" of this story are android twins.

Translator (Japanese → English): Umiko
Proofreader, cleaner, typesetter: Umeko

Futago Scans
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NINGYOUSHIBAI
CHAPTER 2

WHEN I WAS LITTLE, MOTHER BOUGHT US COLORING BOOKS.
BLACK, BROWN, GOLD...
MOTHER SORTED THROUGH THE COLORED PENCILS.
I COLORED A WOMAN'S LONG HAIR GREEN.
"IT'S PRETTY," SAID IRIRI.
"SATORU, THE COLOR IS WRONG."

"BUT ISN'T IT ABNORMAL?
SN
PERSON
"WELL.."
"BUT I
WANT IT TO BE COLORED GREEN."
"OOOH. KIKU COLORED IT BLACK."
I SULKED AT THE TIME.
AFTER THAT, THE COLORS WERE THROWN OUT.
THAT IS
MY FIRST MEMORY
MOTHER SCOLDED ME.

人形芝居
にんぎょうしばい
NINGYOUSHIBAI
CHAPTER 2

FLUTTER
HEY SHIZUKA
IS THAT THE ORDER YOU'RE WORKING ON?
ARASHI
...
YEAH IT'S A BROTHER MODEL
SINCE HE'LL BE WORKING IN A ONE CHILD HOUSE-HOLD FOR A LONG TIME
They'll have more people!
HE'LL WORK FOR A LONG TIME!
HE'LL FILL THE HOUSE WITH CUTE-NESS!
NO, NO,
THERE'S STILL AN ERROR
HUH? DOESN'T HE WORK YET?

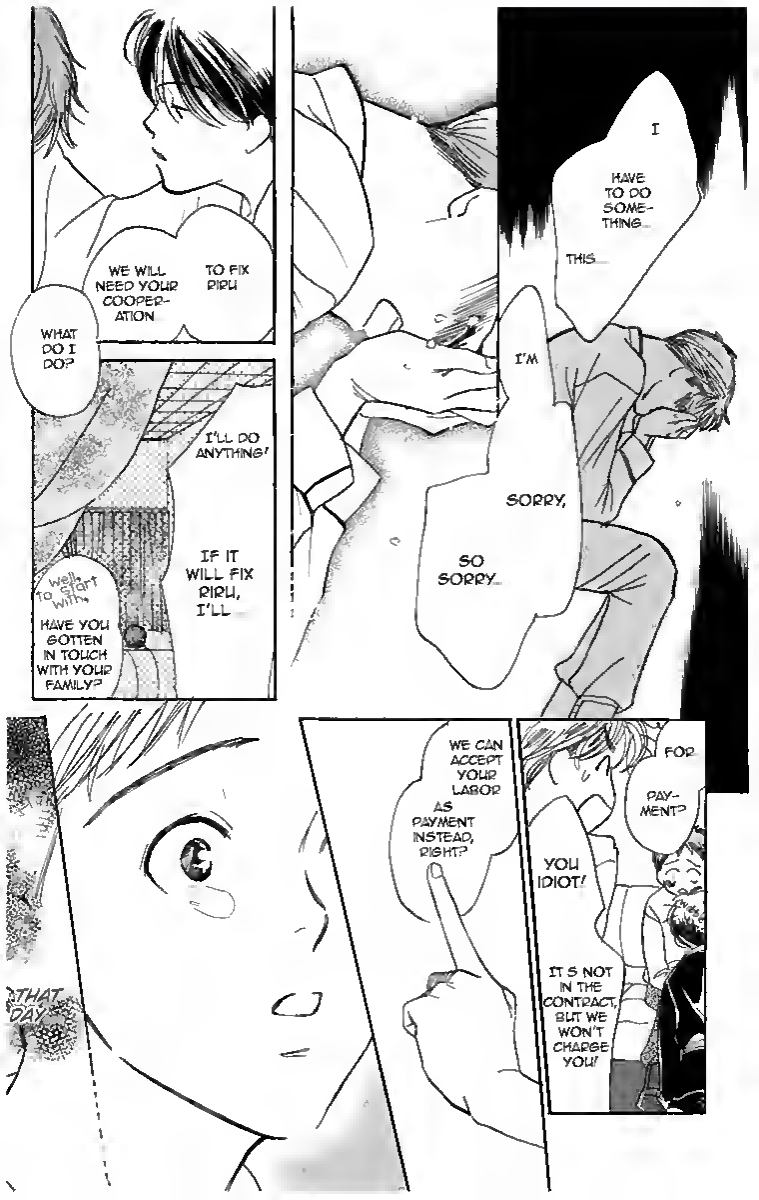
BE
EP
YEAR 28XX IN THE MIDDLE OF THE EAST DESERT NORTH GATE
TWO PUPPET-MASTERS LIVE IN THIS "DOLL-HOUSE"
It's good
It's not bad
STILL?
ARASHI'S STUDY FUNCTION
DIDN'T CAUSE IT, RIGHT?
I'LL PROBABLY HAVE TO TAKE IT OUT.
A HOUSE WITH ONLY ONE CHILD CREATES THE NEED FOR A SIBLING
IS THAT THE DOLL'S RECIPIENT?
NO.
IT'S FOUR DAYS TOO EARLY
*sfx= in
HUMAN EMOTIONS FILL THE CHILD-TYPE ANDROID
I'M COM-ING...
CREATING LIFE ALLOWS PEOPLE TO LIVE WITH OTHERS.
DOLLS ASSIST THE ELDERLY AND THOSE WITH-OUT FRIENDS. THEY BECOME COMPANIONS TO TELL STORIES TO PEOPLE WHO ARE ILL.

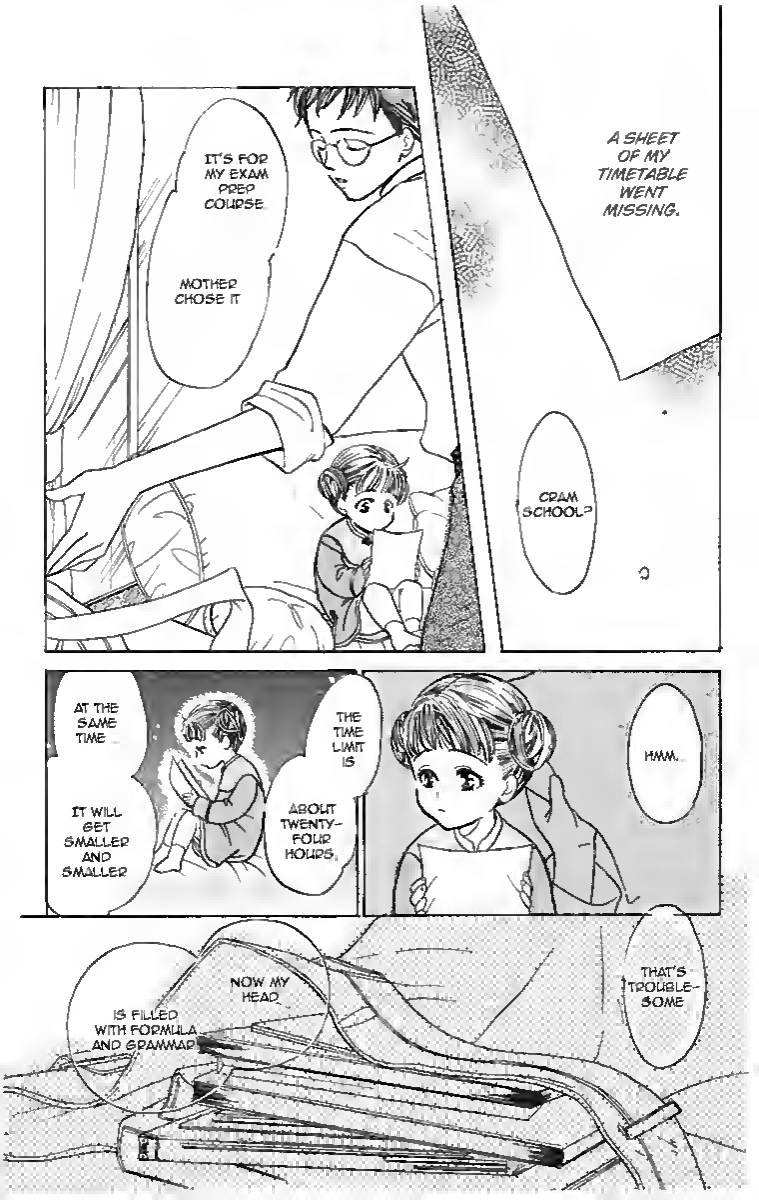
THUMP
HEY,
HEY,
ARE YOU OKAY?
!
SAVE HER!!
S
!
SHE FELL DOWN THE STAIRS!
SHE MIGHT BE BROKEN
FIX HER.
SHE'S NOT MOVING
WAIT.
CALM DOWN
SAVE HER.
SAVE HER.
RIRU IS...

CALM DOWN!
ARASHI!
SHE'S ONLY BROKEN
CARRY HER TO THE RESEARCH ROOM!
SLAP
.....
RIRU...!
CRASH
CALM DOWN, ALRIGHT
IT'S OKAY SHE'LL BE FIXED SOON
AH

THAT'S GREAT
HOP
wobble
SHE CAN BE FIXED
AH...
HOW IS IT? THE DOLL...
YEAH
SHE'S...
OKAY
.....
BUT,
HASN'T IT BEEN A LONG TIME, SATORU-KUN?
HOW... HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME?
I LOOKED AT THE CUSTOMER LIST
IN THE YEAR 28XX, PIPU WAS CONTRACTED WITH A COUPLE'S SON.
OH
YES
WELL, LET'S HEAR IT
HOW DID IT HAPPEN?
AH,
FROM BEFORE,
THE DOLL-MAKERS WHO...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

HUH?
CH...
CHILDREN?
SO, THE REASON SHE FELL...
THAT'S US
IT DOESN'T MATTER THAT IT HAPPENED SO LONG AGO
HUH?
HUH?
sfx = BAM
IN... IN OUR HOUSE
THERE WAS A FIGHT. A QUARREL...
Y-
YES!
THE REASON!!
ON THE STAIRS,
SHE WAS THROWN
AND FELL DOWN, NATURALLY...
IT WAS AN ACCIDENT... A SUDDEN RAGE...
A QUARREL?


I HAVE TO DO SOME-THING... THIS...
I'M SORRY, SO SORRY...
WE WILL NEED YOUR COOPER-ATION TO FIX RIRU
WHAT DO I DO?
I'LL DO ANYTHING!
IF IT WILL FIX RIRU, I'LL...
Well, to start with... HAVE YOU GOTTEN IN TOUCH WITH YOUR FAMILY?
WE CAN ACCEPT YOUR LABOR AS PAYMENT INSTEAD, RIGHT?
FOR PAY-MENT?
YOU IDIOT!
IT'S NOT IN THE CONTRACT, BUT WE WON'T CHARGE YOU!
THAT DAY...


A SHEET OF MY TIMETABLE WENT MISSING.
CRAM SCHOOL?
IT'S FOR MY EXAM PREP COURSE.
MOTHER CHOSE IT
HMM.
THE TIME LIMIT IS
ABOUT TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.
AT THE SAME TIME...
IT WILL GET SMALLER AND SMALLER
THAT'S TROUBLE-SOME
NOW MY HEAD
IS FILLED WITH FORMULA AND GRAMMAR

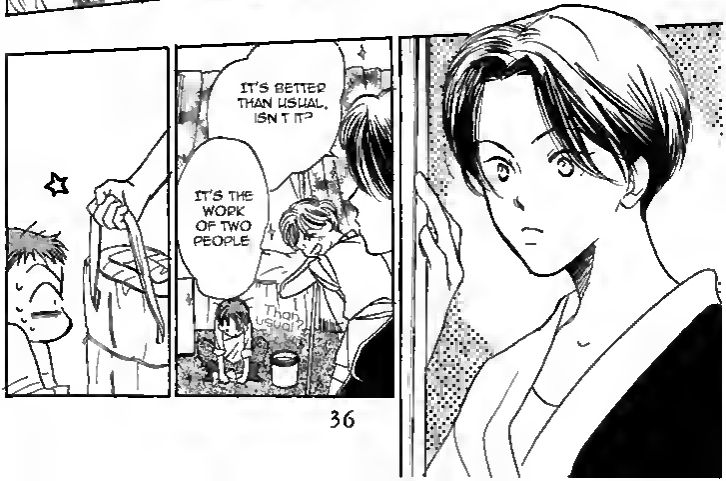
I WON'T BE ABLE TO KEEP ANY OTHER THOUGHTS THAT ENTER MY MIND
MEALS. BATHS. SLEEP. I CAN'T FOCUS ON ANYTHING EXCEPT WHAT MOTHER APPROVES. I'M AMAZED I CAN FOCUS THIS MUCH
IS IT IMPORTANT?
IS THIS REALLY IMPOR-TANT?
MAYBE YOU DON'T NEED TO STUDY FOR SCHOOL NOW.
OKAY.
I JUST WISH IT COULD BE LIKE A REPORT.
KNOWLEDGE ISN'T THE SAME AS A REPORT!
I'LL ONLY BE ABLE TO KEEP IT IF IT'S ALL IN MY HEAD.
WHY WOULD YOU THINK IT WASN'T?

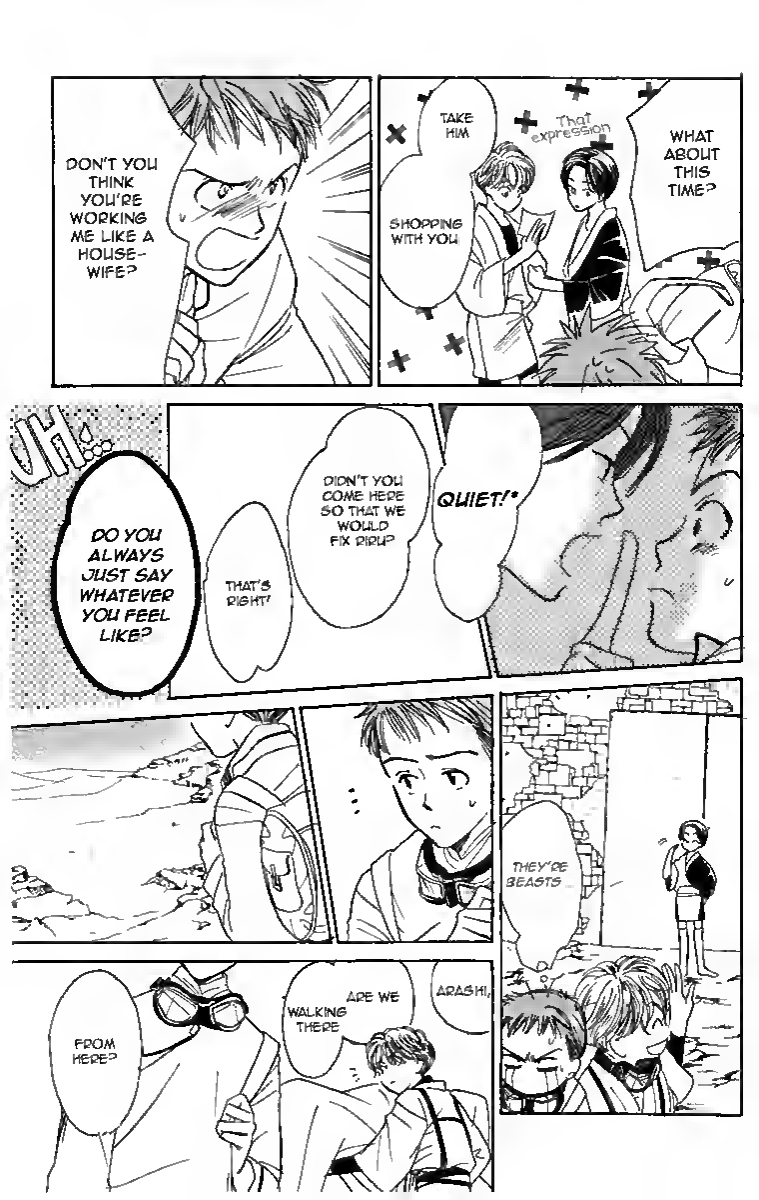
SHUT UP!!
HUMANS DON'T HAVE A REASON TO WRITE REPORTS.
PEOPLE
IT'S JUST THAT
SOMETHING LIKE A REPORT
...EVEN...
WOULD BE FAKE KNOWLEDGE.
SOMETHING LIKE THAT, BUT

WAKE UP!!
HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO SLEEP?
TOSS
WAKE UP, WAKE UP
TOSS
sfx = crash
WH-
WHAT'S GOING ON ?
wobble
wobble
IT WAS A BAD DREAM...
WAAH!
WAAH!
RIGHT?
wobble
"I WISH IT COULD BE LIKE A REPORT..." AND ALL THAT.
WHACK
We'll work together.
YOU'RE BAD AT THIS, AREN'T YOU?
JUMP!
VROOM

I'M LEARNING
IT'S MY JOB
YOU?
IT'S NOT THE EVERYDAY WORK OF A MAN...
CLEANING AND STUFF
THAT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE BAD AT IT
WHO WOULD WANT TO DO THIS EVERYDAY?
Yes, the APASHI
THIS IS THE WORK
I DO EVERY DAY
I'm Cleaner King
YOU'RE BAD AT IT, SO YOU'RE PUTTING ON AIRS
gulp
SINCE WHEN HAVEN'T YOU STARTED JUST MOVED THINGS AROUND?
gulp gulp
DOES HE CLEAN?
EVERYTHING WHEN SHOULD SHIZUKA BE IN PASSES ORDER THROUGH THE PARLOR
I'M THE EXPERT!
HUH?
WELL, CAN YOU?

Y-
...YES.
DON'T WHISPER!
Okay!
BY THE WAY
WHAT'S THIS?
WHAT!?
YOU DON'T KNOW? IT'S A DUSTCLOTH
YES...
IT'S A COMPANY WHERE THEY'RE ALWAYS CLEANING HOUSE...
HA!
CHEEKY!

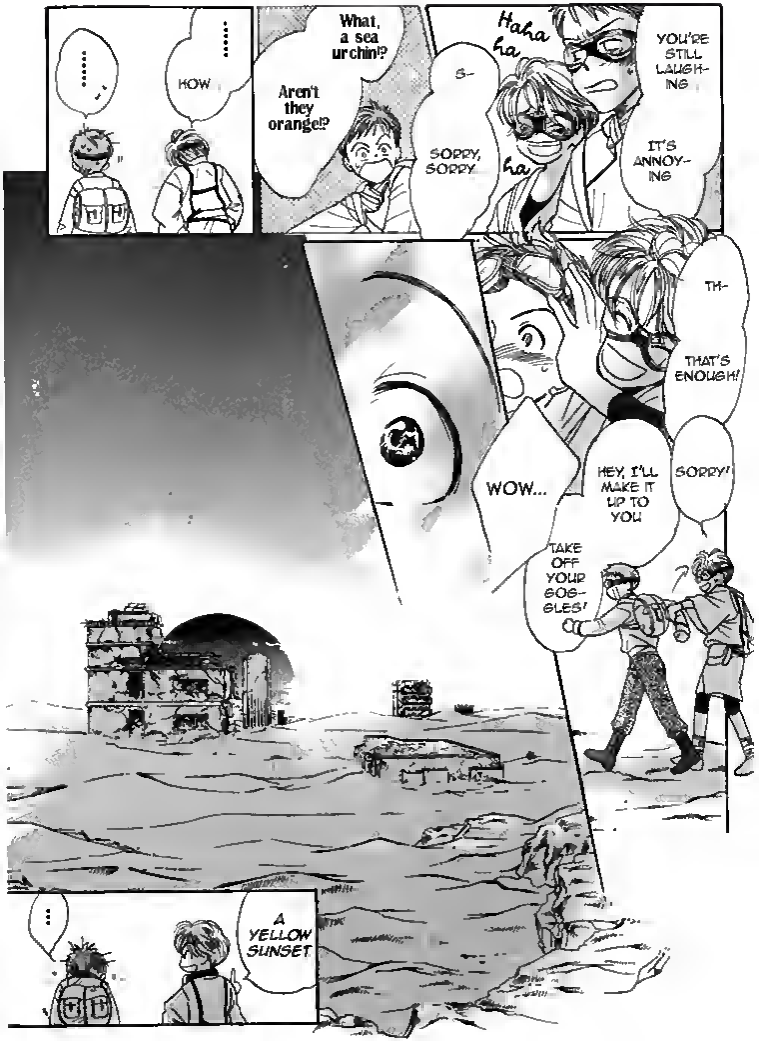

IT'S BETTER THAN USUAL, ISN'T IT?
IT'S THE WORK OF TWO PEOPLE
Than usual


DON'T YOU THINK YOU'RE WORKING ME LIKE A HOUSE-WIFE?
TAKE HIM
That expression
WHAT ABOUT THIS TIME?
SHOPPING WITH YOU
UH...
DO YOU ALWAYS JUST SAY WHATEVER YOU FEEL LIKE?
THAT'S RIGHT!
DIDN'T YOU COME HERE SO THAT WE WOULD FIX RIRU?
QUIET!*
THEY'RE BEASTS
ARASHI,
ARE WE WALKING THERE
FROM HERE?

YEAH, IT'S A WHIM.
ISN'T IT FORBIDDEN BECAUSE IT'S DANGEROUS IN THE DESERT?
IF YOU NEVER TRY IT, YOU'LL NEVER GET USED TO IT
BUT YOU'LL PROBABLY GET TIRED
DOES IT HAVE TO HAVE A PURPOSE?
YEAH!
It's the air here
YOU'LL SEE WHY WHEN WE GET STARTED
O-OKAY
Lesson 99
DANGER IS BEST WHEN YOU EXPERIENCE IT PERSONALLY!
LIKE GIVING WATER TO A DYING MAN
I KNOW FIRST AID
OH...

IT'S ALL IN MY HEAD
I'M THE COMPASS!
WE GOT HERE OKAY WITHOUT A COMPASS
He's really okay with anything
WHATEVER IS FINE
WHATEVER...
DO YOU WANT ANYTHING TO EAT, SATORU?
EH? NOTHING IN PARTICULAR
AH, NO THIS
WHAT'S THIS?
IS SOMETHING RIKU WOULD LIKE
BEADS

shing
IF ONLY I HAD SOME MONEY.
YOU'RE IMPOSSIBLE.
GOOD THINGS COME TO THOSE WHO WAIT.
IT'S USELESS!
WAIT.
!
HEY.
glance
SEA URCHIN
WHAT? APE? IN THESE?
HUH?
What is this thing?
HEY, HEY, LOOK!
AH!
ISN'T IT?
OH, IT'S SEAFOOD.
APE THEY HEDGEHOG EGGS!?
sfx = Hahahaha


WOW
A YELLOW SUNSET
TAKE OFF YOUR GOGGLES!
HEY, I'LL MAKE IT UP TO YOU
SORRY!
WOW...
TH-
THAT'S ENOUGH!
IT'S ANNOYING
YOU'RE STILL LAUGHING
Haha ha
S-
SORRY, SORRY.
What, a sea urchin!?
Aren't they orange!?

WHEN HER MAINTENANCE ENDS
WE'LL HAVE TO WAIT FOR HER TO OPEN HER EYES
RIRU!
WE'RE BACK.
AH...
EH!?
WHY IS IT LIKE THAT?
ISN'T THERE ONLY ONE SWITCH!?
WHAT'S THIS?
A SEA URCHIN?
YEES
HEY,
?
GLARE
AMONG SCIENTISTS,
THERE AREN'T MANY ROMANTICISTS
YEAH, THAT MIGHT BE CLOSE
RIGHT.
IT'S JUST LIKE THAT STORY ABOUT SLEEPING IN THE FOREST...

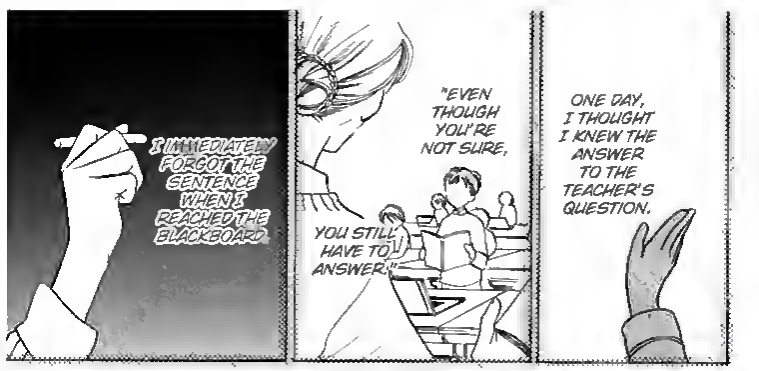
IT'S NATURAL, WHEN YOU FIRST SEE SOMETHING STRANGE
SNAP
YOU DIDN'T LAUGH
WELL?
WASN'T IT FUNNY?
!
S...
SORRY
BE CAREFUL
HAVEN'T YOU USED A KNIFE BEFORE?
カニ
crack
WAH!
ISN'T IT AN INTER-ESTING THOUGHT?
EGGS
CRACK
.....

sfx = crack

I WANT
HEY...
OKAY....
EVERY NIGHT, ALIENS DROP EGGS!
IS THIS REALLY AN EGG?
B BUT
IS THE NEXT DREAM.
GAINING KNOW-LEDGE
NO,
YOU WON'T LOSE YOUR DREAMS IF YOU GAIN KNOWLEDGE, SATORU!
YES, SATORU
DREAMS ARE LIKE A DELI-CACY!
TH... THANK YOU
WHY IS THIS...
Staring at the plate

I WANT TO LEARN
HOW TO USE A KNIFE
SA-TORU,
COME THIS WAY AND LEAVE THE CLEANING UP TO APASHI
WHAT IS IT?
THIS WAY
SORTING THE LIBRARY
APASHI SAID THAT
MESSING IT UP WAS YOUR SPECIALTY
Ha ha
THAT GUY
DOES THINGS THAT ARE FUN TOO
BESIDES
THERE ARE A LOT OF THEM.
A LOT OF DIFFERENT KINDS?

I LIKE THEM.
LIKE "CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN OVER THERE,"
I THINK IT'S "READING THE BOOKS OVER THERE."
LIKING...
BOOKS? DO YOU LIKE THEM?
EH? DO YOU?
BUT... THEY WEREN'T GOOD?
WHAT THE AUTHOR CONVEYED IN THE STORY WAS COVERED IN BREVITY IN THE SUMMARY.
IN TEXTBOOKS WERE INTERESTING. BUT I THOUGHT THAT THE STORIES
I DON'T THINK ABOUT THEM.


I IMMEDIATELY FORGOT THE SENTENCE WHEN I REACHED THE BLACKBOARD.
"EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE NOT SURE, YOU STILL HAVE TO ANSWER."
ONE DAY, I THOUGHT I KNEW THE ANSWER TO THE TEACHER'S QUESTION.

IT WAS UNPLEASANT
IT PROBABLY WASN'T THE RIGHT ANSWER
IF I WASN'T SURE, WHY DID I DO IT?

Umm
ARE THERE A LOT OF BIO-GRAPH-IES?
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO READ?
MY MOTHER ALWAYS CHOSE WHICH BOOKS TO BUY...
UMM...
YEAH
WHAT WOULD BE BEST TO READ...
IN HERE
NO ONE WILL CORRECT YOU.
IT'S OKAY IF YOU WANT TO REST
WHY DON'T YOU READ SOMETHING?

I SHOULD ASK FOR OTHERS' OPINIONS
I CAN'T BE ALLOWED TO CHOOSE
tap
CHOOSE IT YOURSELF
IT'S OKAY THIS TIME
WELL, I'LL READ THIS
WHAT?
SATORU?
YEAH.
MAKE IT MORE OF A HABIT TO CHOOSE ON YOUR OWN
YOU SHOULD

THAT WOULD BE BETTER
IT'S MORE FUN THAT WAY?
rush

GULP
clatter
GOOD MORNING
slosh
YOU DIDN'T SLEEP?
WHAT HAPPENED!?

Wow
Whoa!
SATORU!!
THUD
THIS
REALLY?
IT- IT WAS REALLY INTER-ESTING!
UNTIL MORNING
READING A BOOK ALL NIGHT
HEHE
THAT'S A FIRST
SIRIUS.
RIGEL.
BETELGEUSE.
ORION.
VEGA.
THE POLAR STAR...
LOOK, SATORU.
IT'S CYGNUS.
THE STARRY SKY
IF YOU'RE NOISY
WON'T THE STARS SCATTER?

AS A CHILD,
I THOUGHT THAT THE STARS WERE LIKE CHERRY BLOSSOMS OR FIREFLIES.
IT'S NOT THE STARS THAT SCATTER, SATORU.
WE MOVE.
IT'S NOT THE STARS, SATORU. THE EARTH...
THE GROUND WE ARE ON MOVES.
WOW.
THAT'S AMAZING, RIRU.
YOU'RE A GOOD GIRL.
YOU KNOW EVERYTHING.
THE GREEN HAIR FLICKERED IN MY MEMORY.

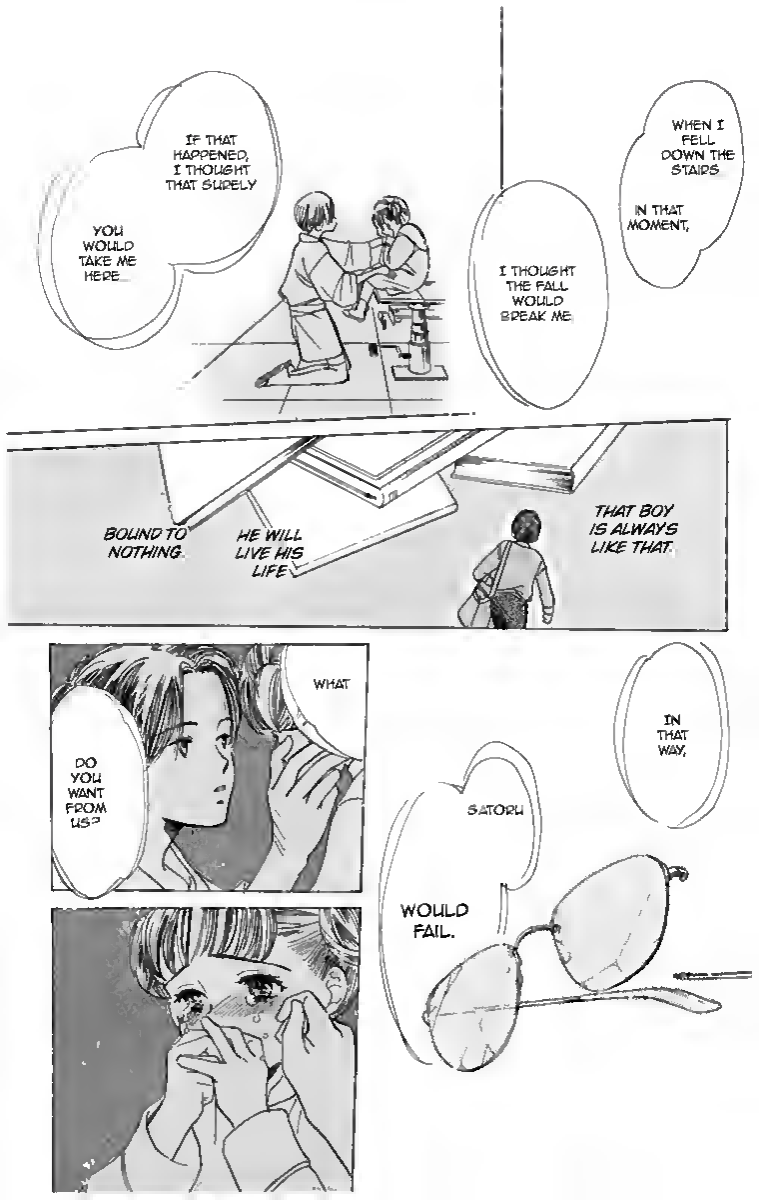
NOT A CHILD WHO WOULD SAY THINGS THAT WEREN'T TRUE.
A CHILD WHO WOULD GIVE THE CORRECT ANSWER.
MOTHER
SAID SHE WISHED FOR ME TO BECOME AN ADULT WHO WAS NORMAL AND CORRECT.
SINCE THAT DAY, I DECIDED TO LIVE FOR TRUTHFUL KNOWLEDGE.
SATORU,
YOU DIDN'T LAUGH
WHO WOULD CHOSE TO BE NORMAL?

IN HERE, NO ONE WILL CORRECT YOU
SATORU...
SATORU...
ARE YOU AWAKE?
A DREAM...
FROM MY CHILD-HOOD...
HMM?
A DREAM...
suddenly
ASTRO-NOMI-CAL OBSER-VATION?
ON THE ROOF?

AMAZING...!
IT'S NOT ARTIFICIAL LIGHT.
DO YOU KNOW A LOT ABOUT THEM?
I'VE EXPERIENCED MANY THINGS THAT I USED TO IGNORE SINCE I CAME HERE.
YOU DIDN'T KNOW ANY-THING.
YEAH, THERE WERE MANY THINGS I DIDN'T KNOW.
SO, BY STUF-FING MY HEAD WITH VARIOUS THINGS...
I ENDED UP NOT KNOWING ANYTHING
I'LL STOP LIVING FOR THAT

IF I LOOK HARD,
I WILL SEE MANY INTERESTING
AND FUN THINGS AROUND ME
IF I INVESTIGATE,
I WON'T MAKE A MISTAKE.
AND MYSELF,
I REJECTED FROM FEAR
I WAS AFRAID
IDEAS I CHOSE,
OPINIONS I CHOSE,
I...
THAT WAY,
FUN.

I WAS BEING WASTEFUL
RIRU...
ARE..
ARE YOU FIXED!?
I'M SORRY
YOU'RE WRONG
FROM THE BEGINNING
I WASN'T BROKEN


IF THAT HAPPENED, I THOUGHT THAT SURELY
YOU WOULD TAKE ME HERE...
I THOUGHT THE FALL WOULD BREAK ME.
WHEN I FELL DOWN THE STAIRS
IN THAT MOMENT,
BOUND TO NOTHING.
HE WILL LIVE HIS LIFE
THAT BOY IS ALWAYS LIKE THAT.
WHAT
DO YOU WANT FROM US?
IN THAT WAY,
SATORU
WOULD FAIL.

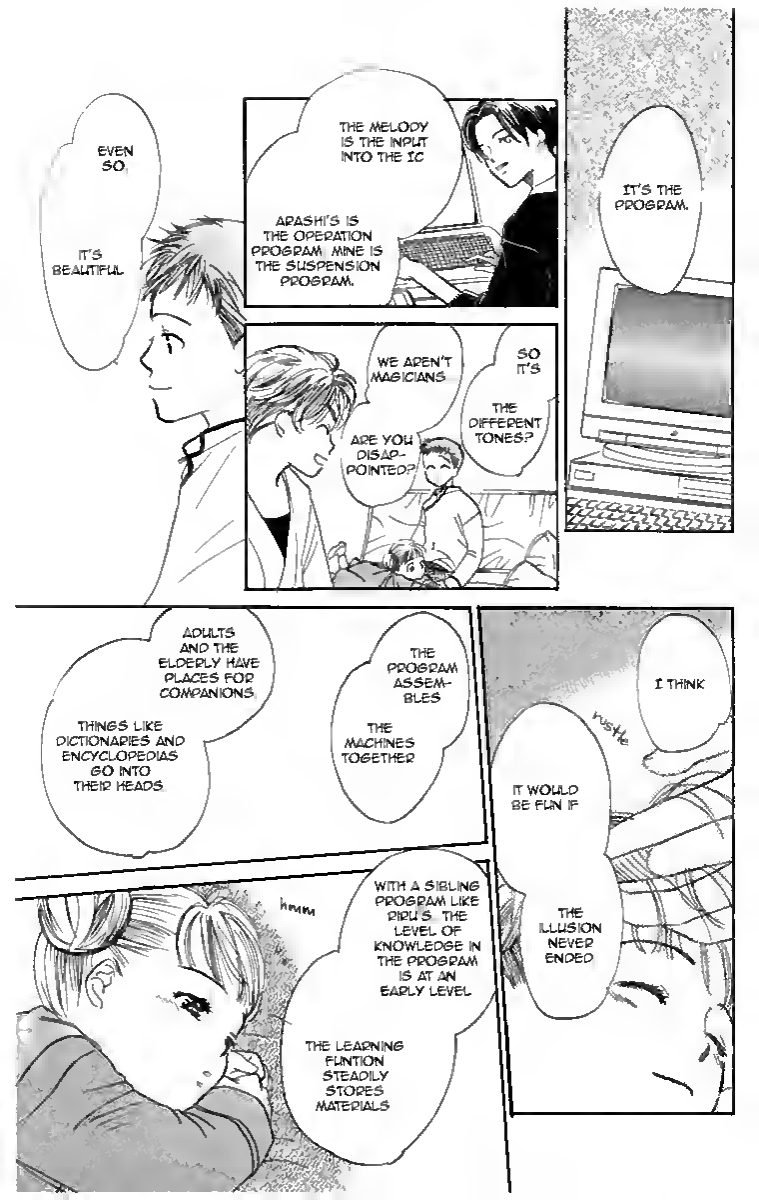
PLEASE...
SAVE SATORU.
SATORU DOESN'T HAVE TIES WITH OTHERS
HE DOESN'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE WORLD
IT WOULD BE GOOD IF HE COULD LIVE BESIDE YOU FOR A SHORT WHILE
THAT'S WHAT RIRU SAID TO ME
I'M SORRY
SAVE RIRU.
SATORU
I'M SORRY
IT'S NOT A JOKE

I'M SORRY
I WAS WORRIED
FOR WORRYING YOU.
HEY
HMM?
HA HA.
DIDN'T WE BECOME EQUAL PARTNERS IN THE SECRET!?
DON'T LAUGH!!
WE ALSO DIDN'T KNOW, BUT
PIPU'S REQUEST WAS
SOMETHING WE WANTED TOO

Oh
AH,
IT'S 10000!
AAHHH
ARASHI!!
PITCH BLACK
HURRY, HELP HIM.
HE'S NOT DEAD
YOU'RE TALKING SO CASUALLY IN THIS SITUATION!
.....
CLUMSY
HEY
I'M BACK, I'M BACK
HE FELL FROM THAT HEIGHT,
SO THERE'S NO WAY HE'S NOT INJURED..

IT'S WEARING OUT.
YOUR SHOULDER CAME LOOSE.
RO-
ROBOTS!?
YOU PUT A LOT OF IMPOR-TANCE ON PHYSICAL LABOR. MY MODEL-
IT'S GOOD THAT YOUR HEAD ISN'T HURT
AHH
WE ARE BOTH ANDROIDS.
THIS!?
WE DIDN'T TELL YOU!?

THE NEXT DAY, A YOUNG COUPLE CAME TO CONTRACT A NEW DOLL.
THE DOLL'S EYES OPENED IN AN INSTANT.
I SAW SOMETHING LIKE ANCIENT MAGIC.
IT WAS A FEELING OF WONDER.

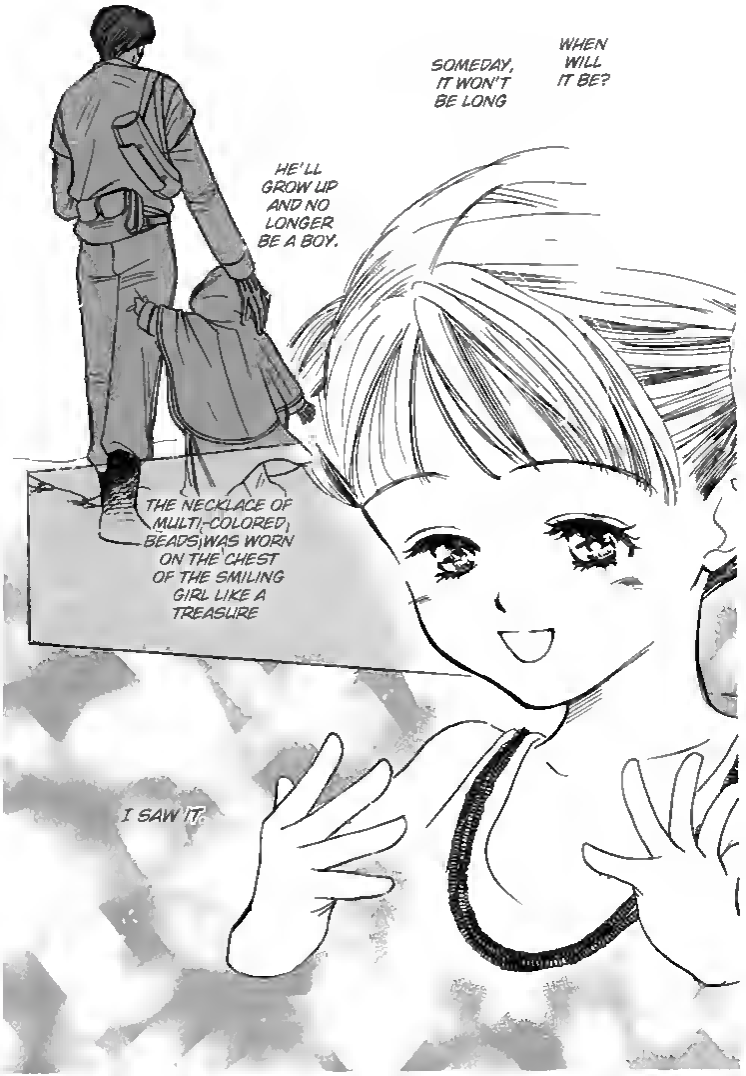

IT'S THE PROGRAM.
THE MELODY IS THE INPUT INTO THE IC
APASHI'S IS THE OPERATION PROGRAM. MINE IS THE SUSPENSION PROGRAM.
EVEN SO,
IT'S BEAUTIFUL
SO IT'S
THE DIFFERENT TONES?
WE AREN'T MAGICIANS
ARE YOU DISAP-POINTED?
I THINK
rustle
IT WOULD BE FUN IF
THE ILLUSION NEVER ENDED
THE PROGRAM ASSEM-BLES
THE MACHINES TOGETHER
ADULTS AND THE ELDERLY HAVE PLACES FOR COMPANIONS
THINGS LIKE DICTIONARIES AND ENCYCLOPEDIAS GO INTO THEIR HEADS
hmm
WITH A SIBLING PROGRAM LIKE PIPU'S, THE LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE PROGRAM IS AT AN EARLY LEVEL
THE LEARNING FUNTION STEADILY STORES MATERIALS

BUT MACHINES DON'T HAVE
A FORGETTING FUNCTION
EVEN IF HUMAN EMOTIONS ARE ONLY ITS PATTERN,
THE LEARNING FUNCTION PROGRAM
CAME FROM STUDYING OF THE GROWTH OF HUMANS.
BUT THERE IS SOMETHING THEY DON'T HAVE...
WHAT IS IT?
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
PHYSICAL GROWTH?
OH, THAT TOO?
haha
Why is that?
GREEN HAIR
EGGS FALLING FROM OUTER SPACE
STARS SCATTERING
I heard from Riru
THEIR OBJECTIVE IS TO LIVE FOR THEIR DUTIES
IT'S A NECESSARY RESTRAINT

"SOMETHING LIKE A REPORT WOULD BE FAKE KNOWLEDGE."
AHH! SO...
FREEDOM OF IDEAS
SO, FOR MACHINES,
THAT'S WHAT WE DON'T HAVE
FREEDOM...
THAT'S WHY YOU WERE ANGRY.
BECAUSE OF THAT, MACHINES APE
FASCINATED BY HUMANS
IT'S BEAUTIFUL.

BE CAREFUL
YEAH, THANK YOU
THE NEXT TIME WE MEET,
YOU WILL HEAR MY FLUTE
AH... WHEN A DOLL'S POLE IS OVER THEY WILL RETURN HERE
RIRU WILL WATCH OVER YOU UNTIL YOU BECOME AN ADULT
!
Just a minute

HEY.
WHAT IS IT?
WHAT?
YEAH,
YEAH
HAHAHA.
mumble
THEY SAW ME AS I AM.
You can still be destroyed
WHAT DID YOU TELL HIM?
IT'S A SECRET.


WHEN WILL IT BE?
SOMEDAY, IT WON'T BE LONG
HE'LL GROW UP AND NO LONGER BE A BOY.
THE NECKLACE OF MULTI-COLORED BEADS WAS WORN ON THE CHEST OF THE SMILING GIRL LIKE A TREASURE
I SAW IT.